Motor and Co-ordinations Skills Affecting Everyday Activities:

Practising an activity daily, is the best way to get better at it. If you practice every day, at a time of the day when your CYP (Children and Young Person) is most alert and motivated you should start to see progress.

Choose activities which are appropriate for their stage of development, i.e. choose activities which are easy for them to start with and then progress from there.

Dressing and Fastenings:

Use 'backward chaining' again to teach these skills, whatever the age or stage of development. 'Backward Chaining' is a technique that allows your CYP to finish off the last step. As they learn to manage the last step, you can them let them do the second to last step, and then a bit more until gradually they take over the whole activity by themselves.

Encourage them to sit down to do this, so they can focus on the activity.

Choose easy garments e.g. chunky buttons with generous buttonholes, zips with novelty zippers added to them which are easy to get hold of. Buttons and zips which are different colours to the garment are easy to see. Try putting some coloured stitching around the buttonhole to help visually define it.

Allow plenty of time, e.g. early evening. Put pyjamas on before getting too tired. Pyjamas are generally easier garments to manage.

Choose easy garments, light, large and stretchy tend to be easier.

Put the garment on the table in front of them, so they can see the fastenings easily.

Talk about 'posting the button through the hole and 'catching it' on the other side.

Make a pencil case for them with button and zip fasteners so they can practice skills at other times too.

Washing and Bath Time:

Floating bath toys are good for your baby and young child to watch as they float around. Watching toys move helps them learn to focus and track toys as they move.

They are also good to swipe at. Assorted sizes and shapes of floating toys help develop different grasps.

Containers for pouring water help with grasping and lifting. Pouring water from container to container helps with hand eye co-ordination.

Play idea: Hand washing games are great for all hand skills, catch the soap in a bowl of water, rub it between the hands without dropping it, then rub hands together palm to palm. Spread the fingers, interlace them, and rub back and forth. Try using a soft nail brush to gently scrub nails. Grasping different textures of sponges and flannels helps to explore texture. Use a mirror to help wash their faces and see where the flannel is.

The above games can be played using a bowl of water on the floor or table, - just for play time.

If your baby/ child does not seem to like washing e.g. because of the feeling of water on their face, hands, or body, try this:

Choose an activity they really love first, so they are calm and happy and do this for 10 minutes first.

Play idea: Use a small bowl of water for washing. Then let them choose soap products which they like the smell of, and sponges or flannels which they like the feel of and try to wash part of them. Only do what they can tolerate, help them to wash themselves rather than you washing them, so they feel more in control. Try and make it as much fun as possible; put toys in the water which they really like and encourage them to wash the toys too.

Teeth Cleaning:

Gently assist them with your hand over their hand, until they develop the control to do this safely by themselves.

Sitting down will help them to concentrate on the task.

Small chunky handled toothbrushes may be easier to hold.

If they seem a bit averse to this daily activity, - try it without toothpaste first. Is the toothpaste smell or taste too strong? Do they dislike the feel of the toothbrush? If so, try different brands of toothpaste/ toothbrushes, such as ones with a rubbery end, soft bristles, harder bristles, and see what their preference is. Try gentle face washing first, to get them used to their face being touched, and then progress to tooth brushing.

USE DENTAL PRODUCTS THAT ARE SUITABLE FOR YOUR CYP'S (CHILD/ YOUNG PERSON) AGE AND STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT.

Drinking:

Help your CYP to hold their cup / bottle with both hands.

Choose a cup which is easy to hold, e.g. smaller, with two handles.

To help prevent spilling, half fill a cup.

Using Cutlery:

Shaped cutlery can help to train your CYP how to have the correct hand posture for easier use of spoons, forks, and knives. (Caring cutlery and Nana's Mana's cutlery are easy to use, or try smaller, chunky handled cutlery).

Offer food which is easy to load onto a spoon and does not fall off e.g. thick yoghurt or mashed potato.

Offer food which is easy to stab with a fork.

When they are the correct age and ready to use a knife to cut food, use hand over hand assistance to help with the cutting action.

'Building block' fine motor skills that may need practice:

Sometimes there are 'building block' skills which are a bit tricky for some CYP. They need help to develop these skills, in order to manage the everyday tasks.

The following toys and activities can assist with these building blocks of general motor control:

Play idea: Use clothes pegs (which need to be squeezed) on a washing line and get your CYP to 'peg up' their pictures, as this can help to develop pincer grasps. Use water squirters with squeeze-action pull triggers. Try two handed skills such as passing small items from hand to hand or try threading with a toy needle and thread. Encourage play with construction toys such as Lego and Meccano. Try sewing, baking and fidget toys.

ALWAYS USE TOYS WHICH ARE SUITABLE FOR YOUR CYP (CHILD/ YOUNG PERSON) AGE AND BE AWARE OF CHOKING HAZARDS.

More Handouts for Ideas:

Cooking Skills

Cutlery Skills

Cutlery - Younger Child Skills

Dressing

Fine Motor-Challenge

Fine Motor Skills

Midline Skills

Motor Skills

Scissor Skills

Shoes and Laces

Toilet Training

Bottom Wiping

Also look at the North Yorkshire Council (NYC) website for activities to assist with co-ordination difficulties. 'Supporting Children and Young People with Co-ordination Difficulties' can be found by clicking on the link below. This was co-produced by the NHS Occupational Therapy Team and The NYC Inclusion Team:

BOOKLET: Supporting Children and Young People with Co-ordination Difficulties

Family Friendly version: Supporting Children and Young People with Co-ordination Difficulties.

More Information for home and school coming soon